

# FTWW

FAIR TREATMENT FOR  
THE WOMEN OF WALES

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## FTWW's Pocket Menopause Myth-Buster

**FTWW IS THE ONLY PATIENT-LED ORGANISATION IN WALES  
DEDICATED SOLELY TO WOMEN'S HEALTH EQUALITY**

## ***Going through menopause?***

If so, you've probably started to encounter fictions and misinformation which surround the experience – so here's **FTWW's Pocket Menopause Myth-Buster**, with the TRUTHS you need to counter those fictions, no matter where you hear them!

**✗ *Menopause only affects OLD women!***

**✓ *Wrong! You can enter menopause (the point at which periods stop) at any age – some health conditions, treatments, and surgical interventions can start the process.***

The average age is around 51 but hormone levels can fluctuate, causing symptoms, up to ten years before your periods fully stop, called the 'peri-menopause'! And symptoms of menopause can go on for many years after periods have finished.

**✗ *Your periods simply STOP!***

**✓ *You're classed as being in full menopause once you've been without a period for 12 months. However, during the peri-menopause, you might have lots more periods and they might be heavier than usual too.***

**✗ *Bleeding heavily? Wear a larger tampon!***

✓ It's not that simple. Erratic, heavy bleeding can be embarrassing, inconvenient and even cause ill health. Wearing larger tampons for longer periods carries the risk of Toxic Shock Syndrome. Women may even find themselves bleeding through several layers of underwear – and heavy / prolonged bleeding can result in anaemia, which may require medical intervention.

**✗ *Menopause symptoms are just hot flushes***

✓ Sadly, not always. Some may sail through menopause without really noticing it, or it might be a real struggle – everybody is different! Aside from hot flushes and night sweats, physical symptoms can include:

Feeling cold / shivery; Palpitations; Fatigue; Feeling dizzy / faint; Headaches; Joint pain; Itchy / dry skin, eyes, vagina; Hair loss; Increased urinary tract infections; Increased constipation; Loss of libido; Raised blood pressure.

**✗ *Stop moaning!***

✓ Some will feel a real sense of loss because menopause means they're definitely no longer able to bear children. Also, menopause is a sign of ageing – and that can be hard to accept.

In addition, menopause can cause psychological symptoms, such as: Anxiety; Depression; Panic; Loss of confidence; Mood swings; Forgetfulness; Loss of concentration; Finding it difficult to think straight ('brain fog'); Recurrence of any mental health issues experienced during / after pregnancy.

**✗ *You're exaggerating!***

✓ Some women have reported such debilitating and long-lasting symptoms that they've been classed as disabled under the Equality Act 2010.

**✗ *Anti-depressants are the answer***

✓ Well, actually, most women should be offered Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) in the first instance, as this can alleviate many of the psychological symptoms (and physical ones) without any need for anti-depressants.

**✗ *HRT causes breast cancer!***

✓ In 2015, updated guidance was published, showing that the risks were over-stated. For most women, HRT is the gold-standard treatment for menopause and can prevent long-term health issues such as cardiac disease and osteoporosis - both of which are amongst the biggest killers for post-menopausal women.

**✗ *Take an HRT pill – simple!***

✓ Not necessarily so simple...HRT consists of a few different hormones and comes in a variety of forms - tablets, patches, gel, pessaries – it can take a while to get the right balance for each individual case.

**✗ *If I can't take HRT, what then?***

✓ If you're struggling with psychological and / or physical issues as a result of menopause, your doctor should be able to advise you on medication. There are also a host of natural alternatives which can really help.

Have a look for multi-vitamin & mineral preparations designed for menopause. Also, don't rule out the benefits of things like walking, yoga, relaxation, eating a healthy diet – and talking to others about your experiences. FTWW's online group is a great place to start! You can find us at [www.ftww.co.uk](http://www.ftww.co.uk) or on Facebook.

***Useful sources of information and / or support:***

<https://thebms.org.uk/>

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23>

<https://menopausesupport.co.uk/>

**WE'RE NOT 'MAD', WE JUST WANT 'EVEN'!**



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